

Box 2a
Box 1-4

An Open Letter
to my Fellow-members of
The Theosophical Society

LETTER NO. 1

MARCH 29th, 1939

DEAR BRETHREN,

These are exceedingly difficult times,
and all the more worth living in for that :

As a member of The Theosophical Society, and also, I hope to some extent a Theosophist, I feel a definite personal sense of responsibility to do all I can to help, having regard to the fact that I am privileged to be a member of our Society and to have made some study of the great Science of Theosophy.

If I have Light, and the world be in darkness, how shall I live better than to spread that Light wherever I can ? Theosophists are by no means the only people who have Light, but at least they are among the Light-bearers, and every Light-bearer must be a Light-bringer, especially in these days.

We are indeed fortunate to be born in this period of the history of the world—at the end of an old world and the beginning of a new. Some of us have had the privilege of including the years 1914-1918 in our present incarnation as well as the present time of dislocation and catastrophe.

How appropriately to present conditions is it said in the Book of Esther :

For if thou altogether holdeth thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place ; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed ;
AND WHO KNOWETH WHETHER THOU ART COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS ?

I have put the last sentence into capital letters, for it contains the great challenge to all Theosophists—do we or do we not realize that we are incarnated in these present times that we may be among the soldiers of the day who fight for the Right ?

Surely shall all wrongs be made right. Surely shall the Jews obtain delivery from their persecution. Surely shall might

become abased before Right. But the challenge is to us—shall we be among the instruments of righteousness, or stand idly, shamefully, by while others use the courage and the wisdom with which we too are endowed?

So strongly do I feel this is one of the major test periods of The Theosophical Society—we have had others before, but none more searching than this—that for some weeks to come I am sending to every single Lodge throughout the world, and there are about 1200 of them, a weekly Open Letter, which will contain my most honest thoughts and any record there may be of the work I myself may be doing to be a light amidst the prevailing darkness.

I might have sent these Letters through the General Secretaries,—they will receive a copy, of course—or I might have used the Watch-Tower of *The Theosophist*, or the channel of *The Theosophical Worker*. But I felt the very great urge to have such direct contact as is possible with every Lodge and every member of every Lodge. I want to commune with each Lodge and its members as personally as I possibly can, for I am convinced that nothing is out of place, nothing is inappropriate,

which is honest and full of the spirit of right action.

I am hoping that this first Open Letter will reach every Lodge, and that occasion will be taken to read it, and all those which follow it, to see if it or any of the others awakens a stirring to DO SOMETHING :

First by way of giving fire to the very Lodge itself and its members,

And then by setting afire the immediately surrounding area, thus helping to produce a world-wide conflagration which shall burn away the weeds of disintegration and fan into flames the fortunately still glowing embers of Brotherhood.

If each Lodge will realize that upon it and its membership lies a grave responsibility to help the world out of its present distress, that there is much it and they can do, then I am sure that ways and means will be found to add ACTION to its members meetings, to its study classes, to its private and public addresses. And if only the Lodge and its members will have courage instead of doubt and a sense of incapacity, they will soon marvel how much

can be done where there is a little courage to take a risk in order to seize an opportunity.

Sometimes Lodges are so afraid. They refrain from doing this, that and the other, because "we have no clever members, we have no good speakers, we have no contacts with the world around us". If only they knew that honesty matters far more than brains, and that sincerity matters far more than oratory. But sometimes they are afraid of making mistakes or of looking ridiculous. Where there is honesty, loyalty, sincerity, there will the Master be. What more do they want?

Let there be no erudite lectures given such as they envy in the larger Lodges. Let there be no fine speeches made such as they envy in Lodges which have at their disposal the facile tongues of practised speakers. Let the Lodge be poor in estate, with only a handful of humble members, and a poor abode. Let the public ignore such a Lodge. Let its meetings be poorly attended. Yet, if there be abiding loyalty to Theosophy and to The Theosophical Society, if there be deep sincerity and enthusiasm among the members, if there be every effort

made to do all that lies in the power of each member to hold high for all to see the spirit of Theosophy which is Truth and the spirit of The Theosophical Society which is Brotherhood, and if each member strives to *live* Truth and Brotherhood in his daily life in all its details, so that he is an example as well as a precept; then will our Masters Themselves become as it were honorary Members of such a Lodge, for it will be doing its utmost to know and to do—and no more is ever asked. It is never the size of a Lodge that really counts, never the splendour of its buildings, never the fine setting of its activities through clever propaganda and able address. The larger the Lodge the greater, often, its danger. What counts with the Masters is the prevalence of simple brotherhood, the widely spread spirit of simple devotion, of simple honesty, of simple courage. And these are sometimes more to be found in the smaller rather than in the larger Lodge, in which mere numbers sometimes cause unbrotherly divergencies.

If The Theosophical Society is to help the world, it must put its own world in order. It must be a Brotherhood, as is its

highest purpose. Therefore must every Lodge be a real, though smaller, brotherhood within the wider Brotherhood. The world needs us, as it needs all others whose dedication is to the cause of Brotherhood. But we must prove our worth. We must first show that within our own ranks we have achieved Brotherhood, not the Brotherhood of universal similarity, of universal acquiescence, but the Brotherhood which unites in a common understanding all honest differences, the Brotherhood which is full of generosity, of graciousness, of appreciation even where there is acute divergence, of chivalrousness and dignity.

In these difficult days the business of all of us without exception is to invoke upon this distracted world the Blessing of our Elders. While they do not need invocations, at the same time it is good for us to make that Call from earth to heaven which releases an even more abundant Blessing. We are part of Them in a very real sense; we are part of the Inner Government of the world; and one of our functions is to make that Call which They can answer. Out of the abundance of our calling will come the

increased measure of Their response. The invocation that follows is impersonal and universal, and if used by you as individuals, and even more as a Lodge, will make a focus for Their Blessing. Use it or any other invocation that to you seems splendid and inspiring. But in these times of the greatest crisis we must utilize every channel at our hand for the saving of the world.

George S. Arundale

O POWERS OF LOVE

We pledge to You our faithfulness, knowing that only Love can redeem the world.

We invoke Your Blessing upon all who strive to serve You.

We invoke Your Blessing upon all who are enduring cruelty, that they may discover their enfoldment in Your Love even in their misery.

We invoke Your Blessing upon all who are inflicting cruelty, that they may be moved to return to You and serve You.